3: Hiscocks G-4, 5 (1946-1949) 1953 EK1 Austria EK1

to three months during 1945 in Vienna milk could only be provided for infants in arms and the seriously ill. It was only by gradual and progressive stages that the supply could be organized for children between one and twelve years of age. At the worst period only about 5,000 litres a day were being distributed in the capital, whereas the normal daily consumption in 1952 was approximately 700,000 litres.

The infant mortality and tuberculosis rates in Vienna show the results of under-nourishment. For every thousand live births the mortality rate amongst infants was 191 in 1945, as opposed to 53 in 1938. New cases of tuberculosis numbered 2·87 a thousand in 1946 compared with 1·11 in 1940. The tuberculosis death-rate for the first half of 1946 was nearly double the pre-War figures and about three times as high as in Britain.

The food situation naturally varied a great deal between the country and the towns. In most parts of Austria there was little real shortage on the land, and the consumption of those engaged in food production probably averaged about 3,000 calories a day. In the small country towns, from which access to the farms was easy, official rations could usually be supplemented. It was in the large towns, above all in Vienna, that the position was very serious.

The emergency was aggravated and prolonged by the requirements of the refugees and displaced persons. The return of hundreds of thousands of Austrian prisoners of war during 1945 and 1946 also increased the scale of the problem.

One of the worst features of the whole situation in Vienna was the acute shortage of fuel that accompanied the meagre rations. Gas and electricity were severely rationed, and the supply of both was unreliable and limited to a few hours a day. Fuel of all kinds, whether coal, coke, wood, or oil, for the average person was almost unobtainable. The official ration of coal per household during the winter of 1947–8 was 300 kilograms, and even this quite inadequate amount could not be delivered in full. Yet a great many rooms in the city had broken windows, and glass was in very short supply and

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prohibitively expensive. The pathetic sight was common at the time of an old woman trudging back from a long tramp into the Vienna woods with sticks under her arm and a rucksack full of twigs on her back. The load would at most provide a little heat for a few hours, and the extremity of the need was proved by the lengths to which people would go to produce such small results.

Vienna is a cold city in winter. There is no doubt that the combined effect of unheated houses and inadequate food was responsible for the death of many old and ailing people. It was also partly responsible for the very high suicide rate. In 1946 there were 933 suicides or attempted suicides in Vienna alone.

The figures given regarding the food supply have referred to food coming from official sources. In Austria after the War there was an extensive black market in food, fuel, and a large number of luxuries. It was the time now often described by Austrians as the period of 'The Third Man', after the well-known film with its unflattering portrayal of Viennese conditions. The rationing system was unreliable as well as inadequate. People were justifiably sceptical as to whether they would actually receive the quotas that had been officially announced. In these circumstances it was understandable that they should turn to the black market as an alternative source.

In August 1945, when the shortage was at its worst, black-market food prices in Vienna were about 264 times as high as the official rates. The exorbitant prices reflect the intensity of the need. And there is no doubt that there were many who paid them. Otherwise the health of the people would have suffered much more than it did. There were very few rich. But the majority of the working population had been able to save during the War, when most articles were scarce. Many members of the impoverished aristocracy and middle class parted with their valuables to avoid starvation.

There was a considerable difference between the black market in Austria and that in England. In England rations were